

Gingrich raps Clinton on welfare here

BY TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

House Speaker Newt Gingrich used a Republican fund-raising trip to Birmingham Tuesday to goad President Clinton into waiving federal welfare rules for Wisconsin and Michigan.

"Gov. John Engler has done a remarkable job of reforming welfare, reducing taxes, cutting unnecessary spending, and shrinking the bureaucracy," the GOP congressional leader said with Engler at his side in the Townsend Hotel.

"Tomorrow is the 30th day of the Wisconsin application for a welfare application. President Clinton said in his Saturday radio show he favored what Wisconsin was doing, then his deputy chief of staff said on Monday they hadn't even looked at it yet, and we've heard nothing more."

"We hope they will give Wisconsin a waiver so they can implement the Wisconsin Works program. He's had the Michigan plan about two weeks. We hope he will also give Michigan the

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waiver.

"Frankly, we don't think these waivers should be necessary. We passed a bill that would make it unnecessary for the states to go to Washington with hat in hand, asking for permission (to implement) work and schooling rules for welfare recipients. Unfortunately, President Clinton vetoed welfare reform twice."

Although Gingrich is from Georgia and Senate majority leader Trent Lott from Mississippi, Gingrich and Engler said many of the GOP's strengths are the 32 Republican governors, many in New England and the Midwest.

Gingrich's profile of an ideal vice-presidential running mate for Bob Dole fit Engler's credentials — as well as Ohio's George Voinovich, Wisconsin's Tommy Thompson and Illinois' Jim

Edgar.

Engler said the Republican Governors Association is preparing a small book on the achievements of Republican governors. "We looked at states like Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and found they've done much good: high rates of employment, higher income growth, a lot of structural growth, fixing problems that have been out there for years."

"We'll look at the Republican success stories and say, 'Imagine if we could do for America.'"

Gingrich was in the Townsend for a 15-minute news conference and a two-hour luncheon with a dozen major GOP contributors. Proceeds will go to the Republican National Committee, said John Truscott, Engler's press spokesman.

"Some of it will come back. Michigan will get a lot because it's such a key state," Truscott said. "It definitely will be one-on-one. You have a question, you're going to get an answer."

Truscott declined to name participants other than industrialist Heinz Prochter, adding: "They're not the kind who talk to the press." Truscott didn't reveal the room location or admission price.

In reply to questions, Gingrich said:

- Even pro-choice liberals view "partial-birth" abortions, in the seventh to ninth month, as "too extreme," comparing them to infanticide. Clinton vetoed a bill banning such abortions.
- Many pro-choice people oppose government-paid abortions and abortions because of the sex of the fetus, Gingrich said.
- His party has "a lot of room for pro-choice Republicans" like Gov. Christine Whitman of New Jersey and William Weld of Massachusetts — "unlike Democrats, who literally censored their pro-life people. Gov. Casey (of Pennsylvania in 1992)."
- Illegal immigrants should be deported, not given government benefits like public education and hospitalization. "I'm passionately in favor of legal immigration; we're a nation of immigrants." But if states are required to educate illegals, the federal government should pay for it because "it's a failure of the federal government. Illegal immigration shot up under Bill Clinton."
- "It would be good for the country and good for Colin Powell" if the retired general would deliver a major speech at the GOP national convention Aug. 12-16 in San Diego, but he understands if Powell prefers not to be subject to news media questions. As a successful American, Powell should be a political activist.



TOM BERNASCONI/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Local appearance: Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich joined Gov. John Engler at the podium in the Townsend Hotel in Birmingham to bring his message of welfare reform and criticism of President Bill Clinton to the suburbs.

Rouge restoration continues

U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg, R-Bloomfield Township, announced approval of more than \$20 million for the Environmental Protection Agency to continue the restoration of the Rouge River, in addition to the \$11.6 million directed to the project recently.

The rescue efforts will focus on sections of the river running through Southfield, Beverly Hills and Birmingham, as well as parts of other tributaries in Oakland County.

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